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**General and complete disarmament**

## **Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

Addendum\*

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\* This information was received after the submission of the main report.



## II. Replies received from Member States

### Islamic Republic of Iran

[Original: English]

[5 October 2007]

1. The Islamic Republic of Iran, being aware of the consequences and effects of illicit arms trade upon innocent people, principally welcomes all attempts leading to preventing and eradicating illicit arms trade. Iran is of the view that such a lofty goal, aimed at the realization of international and regional peace and security, could be attained only through serious international cooperation. Moreover, Iran believes that multilateralism is the core principle of negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation aimed at promoting international peace and security.

2. The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the consideration of the issue of conventional weapons within the United Nations. We reaffirm the sovereign and inherent right of States to acquire, manufacture, export, import and retain conventional arms for their self-defence and security needs in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. We share the concern expressed by the Heads of State or Government of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement at the Havana Summit about “unilateral coercive measures” and their emphasis that “no undue restriction should be placed on the transfer of such arms”. Any arrangement for the regulation of conventional armaments should be in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

3. The Islamic Republic of Iran is of the opinion that for addressing effectively the negative implications emanating from illicit arms trade, it is essential to develop and maintain an integrated approach that should include the following components:

- (a) Maintaining regional and international stability;
- (b) Reducing regional and international tensions;
- (c) Preventing and resolving disputes;
- (d) Strengthening measures to combat illicit arms trafficking;
- (e) Reinforcing national controls on transfers of arms;
- (f) Implementing and following up the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons;
- (g) Promoting social and economic development;
- (h) Preventing unilateral measures that contravene other international and regional commitments and obligations;
- (i) Building and enhancing mutual confidence;
- (j) Promoting the goal of comprehensive international security for all, at the lowest level of armaments and military expenditures.

4. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the legitimate and legal conventional arms trade among Member States is not the major problem which should be dealt with at this stage. As reported by the United Nations Register of

Conventional Arms system, most conventional arms transfers are covered by the Register and are transparent. According to the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development (A/61/261, 15 August 2006), “since the inception of the Register, over 90 Governments have submitted reports each year on arms transfers, with the exception of calendar year 1998”. Moreover, “as at 28 July 2006, a total of 170 States have participated in the Register at least once by reporting on international arms transfers and/or by providing additional background information”.

5. It is evident that illegal transfer of aircraft, warships, missiles and tanks cannot take place as easily as illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Therefore, there is little merit in trying to cover such transfers. Furthermore, according to valid international surveys, it is estimated that from 60 to 90 per cent of the direct deaths in violent conflicts are caused by small arms. It goes without saying that tremendous effort has already been made by the international community in concluding the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted by consensus by the 2001 United Nations Conference. It then was followed up by the 2006 United Nations Conference to review the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action.

6. Moreover, the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons was painstakingly negotiated by all Member States and adopted in late 2005 by the General Assembly within the framework of the Programme of Action. All of these efforts which represent a multilateral progressive approach should not suddenly be abandoned and overlooked. Though the major problem of the developing countries in this regard has been the transfer of illicit small arms and light weapons, regrettably, the provisions of the Programme of Action have not been fully implemented and duly supported by certain major exporters of such weapons.

7. With regard to the issue of the feasibility of the conclusion of an arms trade treaty, past experiences have proved the basic fact that there is always a direct relationship between the existence of favourable conditions in the international arena and chances of success in attempting to standardize international transfers.

8. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran is of the view that such conditions are not ripe for even negotiating a comprehensive global instrument on arms transfer since the major exporters of weapons have not fully complied with their existing obligations under the relevant agreements on conventional arms. Given the time and money spent by the Member States in the conclusion and then implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the substantive disagreement over the similar issues in the 2006 Review Conference, it is not appropriate to add the burden on the shoulders of Member States, particularly developing countries, by creating a new non-consensual track.

9. The production of arms by major producers on a very large scale aimed at exporting most of them to other countries is destabilizing. Overproduction of arms could lead to excessive supply of weapons and consequently to facilitating their entry into regions of tension. In this regard, the largest arms-producing and exporting countries should undertake special responsibility in any international arms

trade arrangement. It is worth mentioning that, according to available data, since 1950 certain Western countries have always been at the top of the list of the five largest exporters of arms.

10. At present, there is no universally agreed definition for the concept of “international transfer of conventional arms” and “the items” that should be covered by such definition. Attempts to develop an all-encompassing definition for “international arms transfers” have proved to be challenging since such definition gives rise to various questions, including the question of entities involved in the international transfer of conventional arms, the issue of dual-use equipment, which has been the subject of continuous contention, and the difficulty of transfers of technical knowledge and services.

11. It is noteworthy that international transfers of technology products, services and know-how for civilian purposes are essential for the social and economic development of States, particularly developing countries. The pursuit of any arrangement for the regulation of arms transfer must ensure that access to such technology is not limited or denied.

12. The illicit trade in small arms continues to be the most destabilizing factor which is often associated with terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. It is thus necessary for the United Nations to continue to focus on measures aimed at eradicating the illicit trade in small arms.

13. Since 2003, there has been a drastic increase in arms transfers, particularly the export of small arms and light weapons. Such a trend in arms transfers is a reflection of an uncertain international security situation. This unwelcome trend underlines the importance of the need for giving due attention to the causes of insecurity and threat perceptions at the regional and international levels which could lead to the increased build-up of armaments.

14. The Islamic Republic of Iran has enforced and continues to enforce effective measures to prevent and curb the illicit trafficking and transfer of such weapons, while emphasizing on the inherent rights of States to national production or legal export or transfer of such weapons — which should be duly marked and registered — under strict national laws and regulations.

15. In order to deal with the problem of the illegal transfer of arms and to discuss possible solutions in this regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran declares its readiness to discuss and exchange views with other Member States within the framework of United Nations.